SAFER IN THE STREETS

A Pocket Guide to Active Protest (for beginners)

PRACTICAL TIPS AND USEFUL INFO ABOUT REPRESSION AN COLLECTIVE REACTION FOR FOREIGNERS IN ITALY

LEGALITY IS NOT ONE OF THE PARAMETERS BY WHICH WE ORIENT OUR STRUGGLE, following some of the advice given here could lead to commit crimes such as unlawful masking and resisting a public official.

The key is common sense and the ability to make one's own decisions in an environment of mutual support and collective strength.

PRINT AND SHARE

IF YOU ARE STOPPED BEFORE THE MEETING POINT

The police often monitor streets, train stations, and highway exits to identify or search anyone who wants to participate in the demonstration (a good reason to arrive early!).

It's a good idea to have your ID with you; not having one could result in being detained or taken to the police station. Carefully evaluate the risk of carrying illegal substances or objects. If they want to search you, they are required to provide a copy of the report stating that they found nothing or, if they did, what exactly they found and what they are seizing. Don't sign the report; you can still collect it unsigned!

If after the search they want to arrest you or take you to the police station, read the section "IF YOU ARE ARRESTED OR PLACED IN DETENTION".

LET'S HELP EACH OTHER!

If the police charge the protestors, trying to break the march up by isolating some protesters from the others, we can all do something. **Anyone can help** thewho is injured, has fallen, has trouble breathing due to tear gas, is blinded by the pepper spray, or is any other way hindered or stopped. DO NOT run away in a disorderly fashion! Shoving, huddling, or ignoring those around you is dangerous for you and others! **The safest course of action is to lift each other up, stay together, and retreating slowly and in an orderly fashion only when absolutely necessary.**

If you fear the situation you're approaching could be turbulent, write in advance a **lawyer's phone number on your arm** with a permanent marker and share it with those around you.
If someone near you is arrested, you can try to: free them; pass them a lawyer's contact information; or ask them to shout out their generalities and report them to a legal team (if you are in contact with one).

TEAR GAS – Lah-kree-mou-gen-ee

Tear gas contains CS gas, which is banned by international conventions in warfare as a chemical weapon, but is used without any issue in civilian settings.

It is used to disperse, frighten, and create widespread panic. It irritates the skin, causing burning and excessive tears, nosebleeds, and increased salivation. You may have trouble breathing and seeing, so be careful of your movements. **UNDERSTANDING ITS EFFECTS IS THE BEST WAY TO DEFUSE MUCH OF ITS REPRESSIVE POWER.**

These effects are temporary and can be alleviated with a solution of water and Malox/Riopan (stomach medication), vinegar, or lemon juice, applied to the face, eyes, under the nose, and to rinse the mouth. **Spit out several times and avoid swallowing at all**. If you wear contact lenses (avoid if possible), don't try to remove them yourself. Rubbing your eyes with irritated hands makes the situation worse; only do so when you're safe. Carry a small bottle or spray bottle with you and help those in need.

It's also common for police to throw tear gas canisters at chest height. They hurt a lot on hit, and **they're very hot**. They burn if handled without proper gloves. Picking up a canister to put it out or throw it back exposes you greatly to the toxic smoke, but kicking them away is way safer.

Full-face gas masks with the correct filters are the best protection against any gas including tear gas; half mask plus swimming goggles also work. Bandanas and clothing dampened with the solutions mentioned above can also help. CS gas is an oily substance that can linger on skin and clothing for extended periods, causing irritation.

PEPPER SPRAY – S-pry ur-tee-kan-teh

Pepper spray is used by authorities as a control tool because of its ability to cause immediate pain. It is difficult to remove from the skin and can even cause first-degree burns.

The discomfort caused by the worst pepper spray can take 20 minutes to 2 hours to subside. **Take deep breaths and find a safe place to decompress**. It's quite normal to feel like you can't open your eyes; grab hold of someone if you need to retreat.

As with tear gas, avoid touching your eyes or rubbing them. After been sprayed, the quickest relief is provided by squeezing your eyes shut to let the tears flow. Once your eyes can stay open and produce tears again, it's best to keep them open for as long as possible to expel the toxin. The longer you keep your eyes closed and squint, the longer you will remain contaminated.

Intense anger is a common reaction to contact with the spray; it can be useful if you are prepared for it, helping you recover and return to action. Adrenaline, if controlled, can provide many benefits! Channel your anger, let it out, and avoid holding it in. The effects of tear gas and spray can be managed and are temporary. Don't lose your composure and stay calm!

Both pepper spray and tear gas are toxic substances and will continue to contaminate you and those around you until you get rid of them. After washing your clothes in the washing machine, do another empty cycle at the highest temperature to remove any residue (another good reason to wear an outer layer of tight woven cotton/linen fabric, or anything you won't regret having to throw away).

WATER CANNONS – Ee-dran-tee

They are used to disperse protesters; the high-pressure water can knock you off balance or knock you to the ground. Sometimes an irritant with effects similar to pepper spray is added to the water, or even dye to "track" protesters.

Raincoats, waterproof clothing, and umbrellas can help you better manage the situation. Avoid being a sitting duck if you're alone. A group behind a thick banner has way better chances of standing against a water cannon. Regrouping after their deployment is the best strategy.

TRUNCHEONS AND RUBBER BULLETS – – Manga-nelly + pro-yet-tee-lee dee gow-mah

They hurt a lot anywhere they hit; aiming for the head is the easiest way to "pacify" a protester because it stuns and disorients, and it shocks and stops a person much more than other parts of the body. You can protect yourself by wearing construction helmets, motorcycle, skateboard or hockey protections, but be aware that they could hinder your mobility and attract unwanted attention.

IF YOU ARE ARRESTED OR HELD IN DETENTION

If you are arrested, use your right to remain silent and seek legal assistance immediately. If you are injured, ask loudly to seek medical assistance (better in public than at the police station).
"I want an ambulance" = voh-gli-oh oon-am-boo-lan-tsa
"I need a doctor" = mee serve oon meh-dee-kou
Don't say anything to the police, even if they tell you it's "in your best interest." Everything you say can become evidence; there are no friendly conversations with cops. It's much better to remain silent than to make the choice to selectively answer questions. Don't speak or sign anything before speaking with a lawyer. Don't fall into their psychological traps (they do have specific training about it). The classic and very useful phrase, "I exercise the right to remain silent" (=mee ahv-val-goh deh-la phaq-owl-tah dee known reece-pown-deh-reh") can save you from unnecessary complications. **However, be careful to avoid raising the tension by speaking or acting wittily, and try to appear calm.**

GENERAL PRECAUTIONS

You could end up in legal trouble if you are recognized in photos or videos while engaging in activities deemed illegal. Remember that details about your clothing (the reason to "black bloc") or appearance (face, tattoos, piercings, etc.) can contribute to your identification.

Assess what could be dangerous for you and those around you and act accordingly. Avoid acting under the influence of substances that could impair your judgment. **Consider your mental and physical capabilities and limitations.**

Ask anyone taking photos or videos not to frame you if you don't want to be filmed. Remove any clothing you were wearing in a place free from cameras if you think you could be accused of committing a crime.

Be careful who you talk to about any heated moments before, during, or after the demonstration; there may be infiltrators or simply prying ears around or in front of you.

Remember that phone calls and text messages can be intercepted. (To avoid paranoia, learn how to protect yourself.) To avoid being filmed by law enforcement, you can blind their cameras with common laser pointers or cover them with smoke bombs and flashlights, but keep in mind that this is also illegal.

PHOTOS AND VIDEOS

Photos and videos of legally dangerous situations have allowed the exoneration of people on trial, but they have also caused others to be framed.

You are responsible for the media you produce, and it is important to act accordingly. Never film anyone who doesn't want to be filmed; when in doubt, ask first and respect their wishes. Filming the police is often more useful, but also more dangerous. According to the law, law enforcement cannot prevent you from filming them in any way, but they are likely to do so, even violently. Make sure someone is watching your 6 while you film.
Before publishing your content, consider what and who you've filmed, and if necessary, delete or hide any details that could get someone into trouble (metadata first of all). Try to **avoid live-streaming live events; streaming video from the squares means providing unfiltered images and handing them over to law enforcement headquarters.**

Communication is a very important aspect of protests and must therefore be handled with care and responsibility. Coordinate about that in advance if you're unsure how to proceed.

REPRESSION AND SOLIDARITY

At the end of the protest, don't abandon those unlucky ones who didn't return home or who will be affected by repression in the following months. Participate in sit-ins in front of their detention place to try to expedite the release of the detainees or just to keep the public eye on them. **Solidarity with those arrested or legally persecuted is a fundamental part of the struggle.** Don't limit yourself to the day of the protest: take part in a static rally afterwards, send a letter, attend a trial: all this means not leaving alone those who are suffering.

KNOWING ONE'S RIGHTS AND FURTHER EXPLORING WHAT WE'VE BRIEFLY SUMMARIZED HERE ALLOWS TO REACT BETTER TOGETHER AND AVOID UNNECESSARY DANGERS OR UNPLEASANT SITUATIONS. Don't take anything for granted. If you don't know how to handle something or are afraid of what might or might not happen, ASK AND GET INFORMATION from those with more experience (legally- or streets-wise).

← linee di piega - formato A4, fronte e retro

TAKE CARE OF EACH OTHERS, SO WE CAN BE BANGE-ROUSTO-GETHER!

each one teach one

QUESTO PIEGHEVOLE LIBERAMENTE!